

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN POLITICAL CRISIS - POLICY GUIDANCE

REF: STATE 9392

1. AS WE ENTER WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE A PROLONGED GOVERNMENT CRISIS -- COMMENCING JANUARY 16 WITH PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI'S RESIGNATION -- WE WILL, AS INSTRUCTED, COMPORT OURSELVES IN A MANNER WHICH IS FULLY CONSONANT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY OF STRICT NON-INTERVENTION IN ITALIAN INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS. THIS POLICY, WHICH HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY STATED AND FOLLOWED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, CALLS NOT ONLY FOR AVOIDING SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS OR JUDGMENTS CONCERNING VARIOUS ITALIAN GOVERNMENT FORMULAS FOR SOLVING THE PRESENT CRISIS, BUT ALSO FOR A GENERAL POSTURE OF ESCHEWING ATTEMPTS TO MANIPULATE POLITICAL LEADERS, FACTIONS, OR PARTIES.

2. AT THE SAME TIME, SINCE WE LIVE IN AN INTER-DEPENDENT WORLD, AT THE HEART OF WHICH IS A TREATY RELATIONSHIP, WHICH WAS FREELY AND DEMOCRATICALLY NEGOTIATED AND SUBSCRIBED TO BY THE GOVERNMENTS AND PARLIAMENTS OF ALL OUR ALLIES, WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO STATE CLEARLY AND RESPECTFULLY TO CHRISTIAN

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PAGE 02 ROME 00872 161853Z

DEMOCRATIC AND OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS OUR VIEW THAT ALLIANCE INTERESTS WOULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY COMMUNIST BEHAVIOR SHOULD THEIR ROLE IN THE GOVERNING PROCESS GROW.

3. WE SHALL, OF COURSE, DRAW TO THE ATTENTION OF ITALIAN POLITICAL FIGURES AND OPINION MOLDERS THE

INCONSISTENCIES INHERENT IN THE NUMEROUS PUBLIC POSITIONS OF THE PCI ON A HOST OF KEY NATO, ECONOMIC, MULTILATERAL AND THIRD WORLD ISSUES. SUCH A COUSE IS CONSISTENT WITH NORMAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE, AND WILL ALLOW IMPORTANT U.S. ATTITUDES TO BE CONVEYED. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE TO INITIATE A PUBLIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

4. IN OUR PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH LEADERS OF THE VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES, WHILE EXCHANGING VIEWS ON THE EVOLVING POLITICAL SITUATION, WE WILL CAREFULLY AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO A POSITION OF HAVING TO ENDORSE OR VETO ANY PARTICULAR SOLUTION TO THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS.GARDNER

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